



Memo

To:	Goleta Vision Committee	From:	John C. Jostes
Re:	Management of Growth Section	Date:	August 17, 2006

Urgent **For Review** **Please Comment** **Please Reply** **Please Recycle**

The Writing Subcommittee has invested considerable time and effort in translating the productive discussions that took place on August 2, 3, and 8 into a draft Management of Growth Section for full committee review and deliberation. It also took into account responses that were provided to the Survey that Derek circulated among the GVC members. A significant amount of work was done by Hal, Valerie and Lauren to try and craft a draft section that represented the full range of perspectives offered by the full committee, during and after the meetings in early August. The result is attached for your review and thoughtful consideration.

At the Writing Subcommittee meeting on Monday, August 14th, a robust discussion of the details of the section took place and further refinements are included in the current draft being distributed. Overall, this version is better than the previous one because of the ideas generated as a result of Monday’s WSC meeting. However, during that meeting several differences of opinion arose that the subcommittee felt were more appropriately resolved at the full committee level, rather than the subcommittee level. The issues that remain unresolved and need to be addressed by the full committee revolve around two issues – the appropriateness of prohibiting any rezoning of agricultural land and the issue of allowing for the use of Transfer of Development Rights as a tool for smart planning and development. Regarding the former, the following perspectives emerged from the discussion:

Ag Rezoning:

One perspective argues that given the “no net loss of agriculture” provision within the agriculture Section of the recommendations, flexibility should be allowed for the rezoning of some agricultural land to non agricultural uses so that unforeseen circumstances can be accommodated on selected infill parcels because assurances are already in place in other portions of the recommendations. The no net loss of agricultural land provisions allows for maintaining the amount of land in agriculture, possibly in areas which are more suitable and productive, while allowing some less productive land to be developed in ways that more compatible with the surrounding land uses and make more efficient use of existing infrastructure such as roads, sewer, and water service.

The other perspective argues that the committee has consistently taken a strong position on the protection of agricultural lands and that agricultural parcels within infill areas should be maintained in agriculture because of its intrinsic value, in order to maintain or provide for a semi-

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rural ambience in the area, to preclude excessive growth, because of food security issues, and that property owners will need to adopt farming practices that make the cultivation of agricultural acreage profitable because that is the purpose of the ag zoning designation.

The full GVC needs to explore where the common ground exists between these two perspectives and determine what language best reflects the common interests of the group as a whole.

Transfer of Development Rights:

One perspective suggests that a policy recommendation should encourage the use of TDRs as a planning tool because they have been effective in other communities with a sensitivity to environmental stewardship and accommodating a reasonable level of development. TDRs provide a vehicle for preserving all or a portion of scenic, environmentally sensitive or open space lands by transferring development rights to areas with infrastructure and the ability to accommodate development with fewer environmental consequences, preferably in the same general area as the sending site, so that the residents of the overall area can enjoy the benefits of more efficient land use and open space preservation. Proponents of this perspective offered the recent Naples TDR study as supportive of such a concept and argued that allowing the use of TDRs as a tool in special or appropriate circumstances was an important part of a community plan update.

The other perspective offered was that using TDRs pits people in neighborhoods against other neighborhoods because it forces certain neighborhoods to accommodate growth they prefer not to accommodate at the expense of the areas that get the added open space or natural areas. This perspective argues for a smaller planning unit (the neighborhood) as opposed to a larger planning unit (the community). Proponents of this approach cite a Brookings Institution study that describes difficulties that other communities have had using TDRs.

As with the Ag issue, the GVC needs to explore where common ground exists or where assurances may be needed to address the risks associated with adopting one perspective over another.

At the meeting on August 23rd, we will be reviewing and refining the Management of Growth Section to address concerns and aspirations of committee members. A productive dialogue will provide clear direction to County staff and the facilitator so that this section can be refined by the Writing Subcommittee and integrated with the other sections that the GVC has already discussed. With the completion of this discussion, staff and the facilitator will work closely with the Writing Subcommittee and other interested committee members to assemble a draft recommendation that will be ready for distribution prior to and discussion at the September 6th GVC meeting.

John